MARVEL 002

FALL OF X

GRØNBEKK
NEVES
BEREDO

REALM OF X

"We were at this Hellfire Gala thing. Well, *I* wasn't supposed to be there...it's like this party for grownups to, like, dress up and smooch.

"We just snuck in to see what the fuss was about, you know...?

Mutants of Earth, this is *Charles Xavier.* You must *not resist.* You must *comply.* Walk through the closest gate.

"But then...*something* happened. And Charles Xavier was, like, in our heads, losing it...

"I sometimes get...*difficult* when people tell me what to do.

How much do we *love mankind?*

Don't be like that, Curse. Come on!

Like *what?* I don't want to!

"But it's not like the entire thing was, like, *my fault...*

"Everyone just *freaked out* and--

Curse! COME ON!

"I didn't want to go through that gate thing.

"And then Magik dragged me to the gate--

Sometimes you have to do things you don't want to, Curse.

Stop it!

"--and I just got so angry..."

...and it's not like I wanted to *hurt* her...or any of them...

I just...

You just *what*, my dear?

I...

Be not afraid. All will be made clear, but know that in doing this, you are saving many humans lives...and perhaps that of *your own.*

We have to go, Curse!

Then let's go somewhere, but...*not with Charles!*

And then we woke up here, and all the mutants who came with us were all... *hurting.*

I...I shouldn't have run away from them, but I didn't want them to be angry...

They're probably looking for me.

The other mutants?

Well, I hate to tell you this, but--

"--I have many eyes in this forest, and the mutants were spotted with the Vanir.

"They are trying to find a way back to Midgard."

"Without me?"

Well, yes...

But do not worry, sweet girl. You are safe here.

Sleep now. We can look for your friends tomorrow.

They're *not* my friends.

[fall__of]
[_____X]

FALL OF X

REALM OF X

[fall__of]
[_____X]

The Wolves and the Lamb

Stranded in Vanaheim following the harrowing events of the Hellfire Gala that decimated mutantkind, Magik, Mirage, Marrow, Dust and Typhoid Mary and a small group of mutant refugees have found themselves taken in by a group of Vanir warriors. However, their help isn't solely coming from goodwill -- it turns out that the mutants' coming has been prophesied and heralds a coming war that has the potential to change Vanaheim forever. The problem is, the result of the prophecy is vague, and as the promised day rapidly approaches, Magik's mutant powers continue to fail her, and this ragtag group of mutants must prepare for what's heading their way while also looking for the lost member of their group: Curse.

Curse, who has found herself in the clutches of none other than the White Witch, Saturnyne! No longer the Omniversal Majestrix, Saturnyne has her own purposes for keeping Curse close...

1___[MAGIK]
2___[MIRAGE]
3___[TYPHOID MARY]
4___[DUST]
5___[MARROW]
6___[CURSE]
7___[SATURNYNE]

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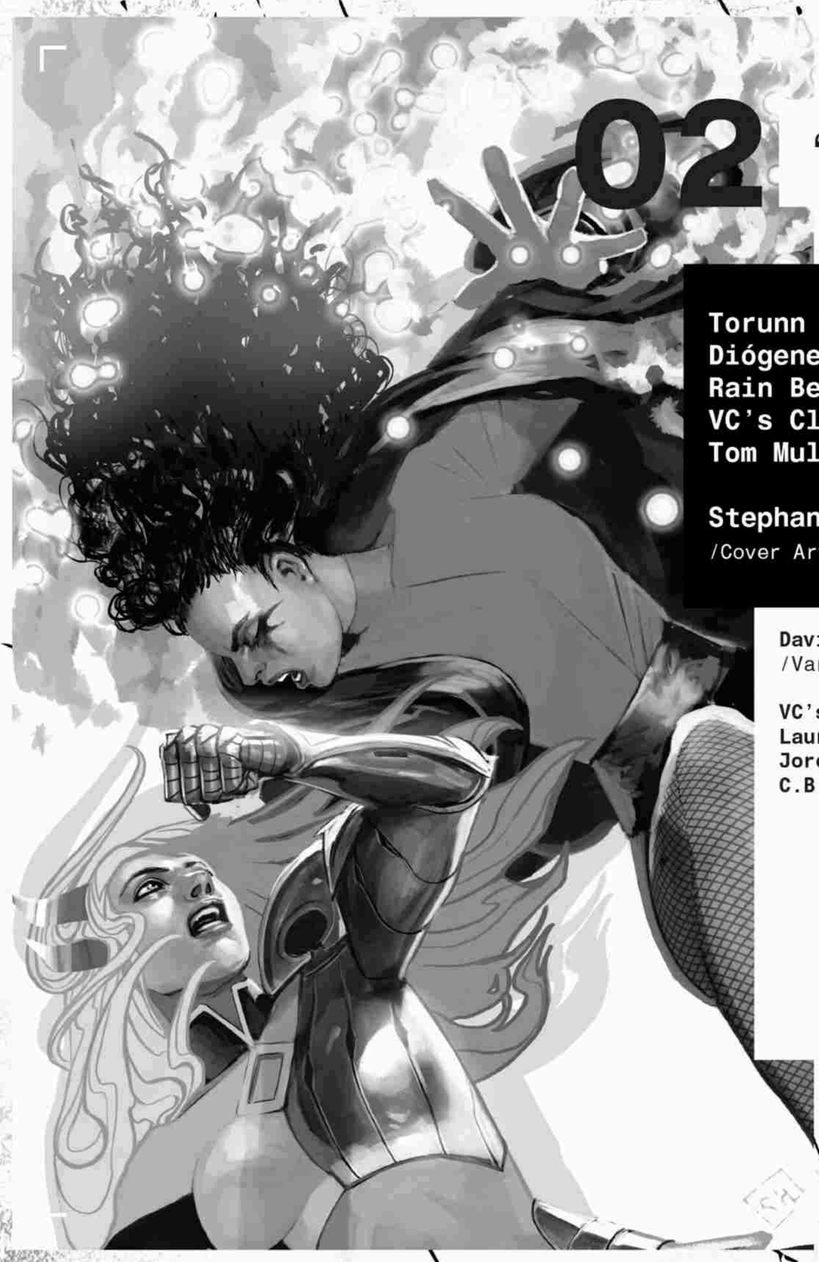

02

"LOST LAMB"

Torunn Grønbekk/Writer
Diógenes Neves/Artist
Rain Beredo/Color Artist
VC's Clayton Cowles/Letterer
Tom Muller & Jay Bowen/Design

Stephanie Hans
/Cover Artist

David Lopez
/Variant Cover Artist

VC's Clayton Cowles/Production
Lauren Amaro/Editor
Jordan D. White/Senior Editor
C.B. Cebulski/Editor in Chief

[realm__02]
[of_x___02]

[fall___of]
[_____X]

X weeks later.

Hope is a fickle thing.

The rival of reason--

--it erodes over *time.*

What do you think, Magik?

Well... I feel sick. *Dizzy.*

...Scared.

I do not want to be here.

It's not just me, then.

It is a charm of some kind, keeping us away from this place. Subtle but effective.

It is the only magic I've felt in this mystically barren place.

So, if there is magic here, can you...?

Ever hungry--

No. I still can't...focus my magic. Something is siphoning power from the entire realm.

I have even tried drawing from...darker sources, but the flow is blocked.

--it needs nourishment to survive.

How far does the charm reach?

A sign--

The feeling of discomfort intensifies the closer you come to the mountain. And then you hit an invisible wall... It covers the entire citadel. I have not found a way through it.

--an idea--

A wall?

A wall. I think I read something about that...

I'll check the library and see if I can find anything *useful.*

--a spark of *something.*

I'll walk you...

I'll be fine! Keep up the search for Curse.

Dani and Marrow should be back today. I'd love to have something for them.

So you can keep going.

The House of Mult.

And keep fighting.

Again.

KLANG

...Again.

KLANG

Mind your elbow!

I bloody well am!

Again.

Typhoid Mary does not feel like she is doing anything wrong.

AAAARRGH!

AGAIN?!

After all, *Fisk* would hardly mind his wife beating someone up.

MARY!

Even if that *someone* is *sweet*...

Mary, please...I beg you...

Is *that* how you beg, Vonos?

I could make you *beg*.

...and *gentle*.

I do not doubt it. I do not doubt your ability to make me do whatever you want.

But you asked me to help you improve your longsword.

An act of desperation. There is nothing else to do in this godforsaken forest!

I must have been out of my mind.

And strong.

Is that so? Do you want me to go?

And in *awe* of her.

Very well, then.

Again.

It has become increasingly clear to Magik--

We should do daggers next. You would not stand a chance.

--that searching for truth in a library of prophecy--

--is much like staring into a bowl of alphabet soup--

Frider! You remember the prophecy about *the walls?*

Joana's writings? Hard to forget. I will find them for you.

But first, we had a delivery from Telemark while you were away.

The book you requested was found in a collection of holy texts in their library.

Are you hoping for divine intervention?

--looking for advice.

No. It is not for me, but thank you. I know it will be treasured.

And I finally found the Goddarf Prophecies.

The text is rather... ***unintelligible.*** Goddarf was famously more of a poet than a prophet.

He was also a raging drunk.

But the text focuses on the ***fifth mutant,*** and I understand she is of some interest to you. Goddarf refers to it as Chaos, not Curse.

But there is a drawing, if memory serves...

A-ha!

It's her.

"Chaos, wild tempest with unyielding tide, its swirling winds a tumultuous decree, in the realm where chaos and peace abide."

Where are you, Curse?

Diary Entry

By Frider Frostborn,
Current Head Librarian at the Library of Prophecy
Six weeks ago

Renowned prophetess Joana Thornwood is visiting the library. She has been here for a fortnight, and we are running out of time. And wine.

We had hoped she would be able to shed light on the question of the fifth stranger, but she seems preoccupied with walls. She has written endless passages about barriers, partitions and the dividers between us -- literally, magically -- and metaphorically.

It falls to me to interpret her prophecies, and I am beginning to wonder if the barrier she is referring to is related to a strange phenomenon reported throughout Vanaheim: We seem to be losing our magic. Could these walls she speaks of somehow disrupt the flow of powers in the realm?

Joana is considered the most accurate soothsayer in Vanaheim, but, as with many of those who offer only truth in their predictions, it is usually only possible to piece together their meaning until after the event has already happened, and by then, it is too late. Finding something of use with the battle mere weeks away feels like a futile exercise.

I am becoming increasingly aware, surrounded by paper and prophecy as I am, that when the war is inevitably upon us, my life's work is over in one way or another. It is difficult to be certain that it has all been worth it in the end.

We have repeatedly offered Joana refuge in the library for the battle, but her answer is always the same:

"I intend to die laughing, upside down, watching the fools dance to the tune of fate's fiddle."

(I do not know what it means.)

Emberstone Citadel.

"--Yesterday, she used her powers on one of the prisoners.

"She made him vomit *Kerulean toads.*"

Toads? Well, that's not too bad, Tsanna.

And you have to admit, the girl has a sense of humor.

Kerulean toads went ***extinct*** a century ago. She brought them back on a ***whim.***

I'm not even sure she knew what they were or that she did it. One jinx, and there they were, back from oblivion.

Oh, I see. ***Amazing.***

She has been here for weeks already. She obviously likes you...

Why do you not ask her to help?

"No. I have been observing her powers...

HEY!

Oh...it's ***you.***

Well, go on, then-- take as many as you'd like, dear.

DNK OUU!

"Something like this would come at a ***great cost***...it might even claim her life."

It must be *her* idea. She must want to help us. She must want to do it more than anything, or I fear her power will fail.

But I do think it is time to plant the idea in her mind.

My queen!

Are we ready to try *again?*

Twenty-third time's a charm.

Yes!

We have to keep trying, Tsanna.

NMIX NMIX NMIX!

...Awesome.

NMIX NMIX NMIX!

Good morning, Curse.

Good... What...what is that thing?

It is our *salvation--*

--if we could but get to it.

What does that mean?

It is an ancient power source.

The citadel was built around it. It is how the Vanir of old powered the gates and trading routes to other realms back in the day.

It brought Vanaheim to the universe and the universe to Vanaheim.

But when the Vanir left their cities, they hid it.

Hid it? It's right there!

It was too powerful to be destroyed, so they used its power to hide it in another dimension. We are looking at it through a one-way portal to, well, *somewhere...*

So *weird!*

Yes...*weird.* And *frustrating.*

Limitless power-- right there, yet not there at all. We need to bring it back, but we are running out of time.

Without it, we do not stand a chance in the coming war.

It is not quite a lie--

--but not the entire truth either.

That's the place...

I suppose we could try just walking through the front gates...?

You'd be dead in a second.

Bounty hunters.

Is that so? I don't see why. We have no enemies here.

You do not understand Vanaheim, do you?

You know, when Vanir children turn one, we celebrate a ceremony called Verus.

A ***sibyl*** will look into the child's life and provide three insights into their future.

It is considered the most formative part of life in this realm.

But the last few years, the sibyls have seen nothing but a haze of clouds.

A generation of Vanir children growing up in the dark.

Because of you.

It has been a frustrating few weeks.

And in this moment--

I repeat: We do not ***want*** any ***trouble.***

Rightfully or not, many here blame you for what's to come.

--Dani Moonstar does not speak for Marrow.

After weeks of walking through this war-torn land--

So, yes, in a way, this is ***personal.***

But there is also a massive price on your heads.

Dead or alive. Your choice, girlies.

--she is aching for a fight.

And she decides--

Tonight, when every breath you take is torment--

--when you regret every pathetic step that brought you to this miserable fight--

Sarah... don't...

--they will do.

Get them!

--remember-- this was on you.

Dammit.

Mirage and Marrow choose mercy.

SHLK

(Of sorts.)

KRAK

Dani Moonstar's arrow does not hurt the body--

--but it traps the mind in its own nightmares.

What do you say? Still want to kill the girlies?

Sarah!

Dani! Sarah! What happened?

Bounty hunters. Apparently, there's a price on our heads.

We were looking for a way in... but--

THWAK

You want to infiltrate the citadel?

Want is a strong word. But we have exhausted every other possibility.

There is supposed to be a connection to the World Tree in the citadel. Maybe even a port with functioning ships...

It's our last resort, but we're not getting through that entrance without an army.

I have been probing the perimeter of the wall surrounding the citadel. There is a hidden gate on the east side. The raiders use it to enter Vanir territory.

It is protected by a magical wall, but there are weaknesses. I think we can get through.

Are you still searching the forest for Curse?

Every day. I can cover more ground than Illyana, and she would be out here if I were not.

Personally, I am convinced Curse is in the citadel. It is the only place we have not searched.

Magik still blames herself?

Yes.

She has been taking care of the wounded and poring over books in the library.

To tell you the truth, I am worried about her. This realm is doing something to her magic, and her powers are still lost. She seems lost without them.

What of Typhoid Mary?

Later. The House of Mult.

"Well, Mary is Mary still."

SLAM

You've been gone for weeks--

--you return with NOTHING--

That's not fair, Mary.

We have not rested. We have tried every portal, every ship, every key and spell. We are trapped here.

Whatever is cutting Vanaheim off from the rest of the realms is doing a thorough job.

What about Asgard? Aren't you, like, old friends?

Our messages go unanswered.

Either Asgard is involved somehow, or we're not getting through.

I want.

To go.

Home.

Our last resort is trying to get into the citadel itself.

I will pledge my unyielding allegiance to the White Witch if she can get us out of this godforsaken mud pit.

You would not say that if you'd seen what we have seen, Mary.

Well, *I* haven't seen anything, have I, because I've been stuck here with Wannabe Legolas and Little Miss Powerless like some glorified babysitter!

All of our people are fully recovered now. The prophesied battle is only a day away...*if* we could get them out of here before the war--

It's worth a *try*.

I say we go--

Well, *you're* not going at any rate.

I--

Face it, Magik.

You can't pull your weight in a fight.

It's unfair for the rest of us if you go.

Nothing hurts like the truth.

For $#&%# sake, Mary.

You have the sensibility of a dump truck.

No...it's okay. She is right. You go.

Find Curse. Find a way to get the others to safety.

Thor Odinson, All-Father and King of Asgard,

We are unsure if you have received our previous communications, but we take the liberty of asking for your assistance once more.

Our realm is in peril. The one who calls herself the White Witch has taken up residence in Emberstone Citadel. She is rebuilding the structure we abandoned eons ago and, along with it, we fear, the weapons and war machines that the Vanir once forged. Despite our renewed attempts at peaceful negotiations, diplomacy has proven unsuccessful.

If the potential destruction of Vanaheim, your long-standing ally, fails to spur your forces into action, perhaps the notion of an unknown adversary armed with ancient Vanir weaponry will. Should you need a reminder of the devastation they are capable of, we urge you to consult your own historical records. Know that there is no reason to believe this sorceress will confine her campaign of violence to our realm.

We are prepared and willing to fight. We are fully ready for the conflicts that lie ahead. Yet the future is most uncertain, and when we consult it, we see nothing but darkness.

We implore you to assist us, and if that is not feasible, we request a response. Your silence in this matter is difficult to interpret as anything other than an act of aggression.

ᛏᚱᚤᛒᛁᚾ

Commander Trabin of the House of Mult,
Vanaheim

There are ways to change fate. But that is not what you want, is it, Saturnyne?

You want to control it. And that, sweet, cruel queen, is beyond you.

What a bore you are, Joana.

There is a theory that the only way to change one's fate is to give something up.

Not a symbolic thing. Destiny cares little for gestures.

But truly go against your nature. Give your very self up and see what grace you will find.

But you will not give up anything, will you?

You are not going to let this old hag get to you, my queen?

If I cannot change the prophecy, why act at all? Why not sit back and wait?

The mutants are here. I can feel them walking through the charmed forest.

They have come for their lost lamb.

So you try to control the game of fate--

--without knowing the rules.

And without understanding that we all play a part in what's to come.

You can try to outsmart your destiny if you like. See where it gets you.

Well?

What will you do, Saturnyne? Are you going to fight?

It begins small.

Soft unease. Exhaustion.

A nagging feeling that something is wrong.

Then the memories come--

--like memories do--

--out of nowhere.

Lived horrors--

Do you feel that?

--coming alive in their minds.

Marrow sees Alexandria.

What the hell is happening?

She feels the emptiness twist her inside. The guilt is overwhelming.

It is whatever it takes to make us turn around. It will pass... I think.

Sooraya has never told anyone what she sees in her darkest hours.

I hope.

But she does what she always does when the images of her past intrude--

--she prays.

And keeps going.

In the depths of Mary's mind, there is blood. Coats that once were white.

Stay with us, Mary. It's just a trick.

Had Magik been with them, she could have told them who was watching their memories.

Through here.

After you.

She would have understood what they were ***giving away*** as they walked through the shield of magic.

Bloody hell.

She would have understood who they just let into their minds.

But Illyana is driven by her own fears--

This has been her all along?

Is that...?

Screaming.

MARY
MARLOW
DANI
SOORAYA
--complex and all-consuming--
--they are not of pain and death.
For a moment, she wonders if there is another way.
Are you going to let this fraud change your mind?
No. We find them. We kill them.
If this is playing into the hands of destiny.
But let us summon some help.
That's it, Saturnyne. Death begets death. War begets war.
But this is how it was always going to be.

Though she's determined--

--as Magik walks away--

--a small part of her wants someone to notice.

She wants someone to stop her.

(No one does.)

To be continued.

KRAKOA is for all MUTANTS

[fall__of]
[_____X]

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KAMIC RIDER

MARIKA